

June 2 FCC rulemaking; Docket No. 02-277

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

Although I am generally a Conservative Republican, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain (if not strengthen) all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already dominating companies and encouraging diverse control in not only the broadcast industry, but related media.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. There are many more sources of media than ever before, however these sources are not all available to everyone and the spectrum of views presented, particularly in broadcast media, have become more limited. Open-air broadcast media is the one unique outlet that is truly mass-media, ubiquitously available to all virtually free, without monthly subscription or ongoing charges many citizens cannot afford.

When evaluating media ownership, open-air broadcast really does deserve to be held in a separate category, considered an especially critical resource to the citizenry. The Commission already does this, regulating broadcast media differently from wired media or digital data communications. This is appropriate and necessary. Broadcast media is a critical public resource, regulated by governments to nurture and organize its growth and prevent self-destructive anarchy (channel overlap and signal disruption.) Once regulated, government must assume the full mantle of this responsibility and assure the public airwaves are used to serve the public interest as the Commission has done for many years. Of necessity, the Commission created a protected franchise in broadcast media. By relaxing rules on diversity, but retaining the barriers to new entry continuing to protect the franchise, the Commission serves to foster the growth of near monopolies in media ownership within markets.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows ownership and control of our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints in the public domain will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served by preserving and perhaps re-strengthening media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I request the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Respectfully submitted,

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